

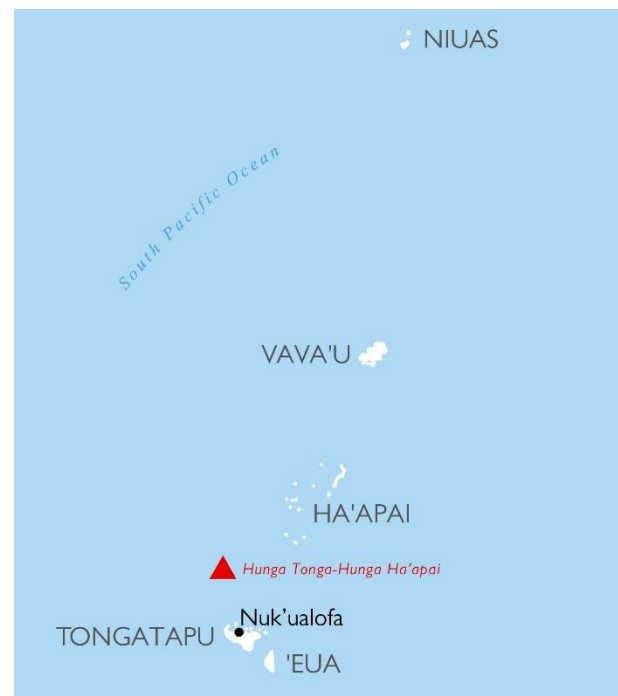
# Tonga – Volcanic Eruptions and Tsunami

FEBRUARY 11, 2022

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<b>84,800</b>	<b>2,390</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>4</b>
Estimated Number of People Directly Affected by the Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami <i>UN – February 2022</i>	Estimated Number of People Displaced by the Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami <i>IOM – February 2022</i>	Estimated Number of People in Need of WASH Support <i>UN – January 2022</i>	Number of Deaths due to the Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami <i>UN – February 2022</i>

- On January 16, U.S. Charge d’Affaires Tony Greubel declared a disaster in Tonga due to the effects of the volcanic eruptions and tsunami. In response, USAID/BHA has announced \$2.6 million in assistance to support food security and agriculture, health, protection, shelter, and WASH services among the most-affected communities, particularly in Tonga’s ‘Eua, Ha’apai, and Tongatapu island groups.
- Nearly one month after the volcanic eruptions and tsunami in Tonga, the GoT and humanitarian partners continue to clear debris, restore basic services, and respond to humanitarian needs across the country.
- Ashfall and seawater inundation adversely affects food security, livelihood, and WASH conditions among many populations in Tonga, as displaced individuals and vulnerable groups face increased protection risks, the GoT and humanitarian actors report.



TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING	USAID/BHA <sup>1</sup>	\$825,000 <sup>2</sup>
For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 7.	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$825,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

<sup>2</sup> Funding figures reflect committed and obligated funding as of February 11, 2022. Total comprises a subset of the \$2.6 million in publicly announced USAID/BHA funding to the Tonga volcano and tsunami response.

## TIMELINE

### January 14, 2022

Tonga's Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai Volcano begins erupting

### January 15, 2022

A second eruption from Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai Volcano causes a tsunami affecting the Pacific region

### January 16, 2022

U.S. Charge d'Affaires Tony Greubel declares a disaster; USAID/BHA allocates \$100,000 to support emergency response activities

### January 18, 2022

GoT declares a state of emergency, effective from January 16, in response to the eruptions and tsunami

### January 19, 2022

GoT submits a request to the UN Resident Coordinator for urgent humanitarian assistance to support populations affected by the eruption and tsunami

### January 24, 2022

USAID/BHA announces additional \$2.5 million in assistance to support volcano and tsunami response and recovery

### February 2, 2022

COVID-19 cases detected in Tonga prompt the GoT to institute a lockdown

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### Eruption and Tsunami Generate Humanitarian Needs; GoT, Relief Actors Assess Needs and Respond

The January 14 and 15 eruptions of Tonga's Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai Volcano—located on the uninhabited Hunga Tonga Island approximately 43 miles northwest of Tonga's capital city of Nuku'alofa on Tongatapu island—and the resultant tsunami affected nearly 85,000 people across Tonga; resulted in at least four deaths; internally displaced nearly 2,400 people, or more than 2 percent of the country's population; and damaged or destroyed at least 280 houses as of early February, the Government of Tonga (GoT) and the UN report. Among those displaced, an estimated 54 percent are sheltering in Tongatapu, 31 percent in Ha'apai island group, and 15 percent in 'Eua island group. Approximately 36 percent of those displaced are children under 16 years of age. Displaced and affected individuals urgently require food, shelter, and water provisions, as well as protection assistance, with approximately 25,400 women and girls in need of dignity kits and hygiene supplies. An estimated 1,470 pregnant women and 1,960 women with children younger than 12 months of age require additional sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, according to the UN.

The tsunami also negatively affected water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) conditions, particularly the availability of safe drinking water, across affected areas. At least 50,300 individuals across Tonga are in need of WASH assistance, such as safe drinking water, rainwater tanks and collapsible containers, as well as water testing and purification supplies, with particularly acute needs persisting among households relying on rainwater as their primary water source, according to the UN. In early February, samples indicated that water from Ha'apai's Fonoi, Nomuka, and Tungua islands was contaminated with seawater from the tsunami and unsafe for consumption; however, groundwater in many locations is suitable for drinking if communities follow standard precautions, such as boiling water before consumption, relief actors report. Humanitarian actors note that rainfall forecast for early to mid-February could alleviate some of the current shortages of water in Tonga, as many households routinely capture rainwater for household use.

The GoT National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) continues to conduct damage assessments of infrastructure in eruption- and tsunami-affected areas—particularly in 'Eua, Ha'apai, and Tongatapu, the three most affected areas—with support from relief actors, including USAID/BHA partners. In addition, the GoT is assessing damage to critical infrastructure, residences, and service systems, including testing water samples and subsequently spreading public messages to inform populations regarding varying levels of water quality.

## **Emergence of COVID-19 Prompts Lockdown, Challenges Relief Efforts**

GoT-coordinated efforts to assess needs, clear ash, and distribute assistance to populations in need continue amid a recent outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Tonga. On February 2, the GoT identified two positive cases of COVID-19 in Nuku'alofa, with additional cases confirmed in subsequent days. As of February 11, 73 cases had been confirmed in Tonga, according to the UN World Health Organization (WHO); the country had previously been largely free of COVID-19. To prevent further spread of the disease, the GoT instituted a nationwide lockdown on February 2, extending it for an additional 14 days on February 6. During the lockdown, all schools remain closed, and civilians are encouraged to remain in their homes and wear masks in public, though essential services remain available during limited hours. All domestic flights in Tonga have also been canceled—although international flights carrying assistance continue to arrive—and inter-island transportation is prohibited for non-essential business.

Despite the lockdown restrictions, NEMO continues to coordinate with international relief actors to deliver assistance to affected populations through modified, contact-free distribution systems. The GoT maintains a mandatory 72-hour quarantine for all relief commodities and a 21-day quarantine for individuals arriving in Tonga from third countries, which has impacted the distribution of many relief items, including health commodities, satellite phones and other telecommunications supplies, as well as WASH items. GoT officials expressed confidence in the country's ability to control the COVID-19 outbreak amid high vaccination rates, given adequate health system capacity and stores of personal protective equipment (PPE).

## **Communications Challenges Persist Due to Severed Cable; ETC Responds**

The eruptions and tsunami severed the undersea telecommunications cable linking Tonga with neighboring Fiji, and though efforts are underway to repair the cable, communications to and within the country remain severely limited, according to the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC).<sup>3</sup> In response to communications needs in Tonga, the ETC dispatched shipments of emergency communications equipment—including Iridium satellite phones, and broadband global area network terminals (BGANs) and very small aperture terminal satellite antennas (VSATs) to enable limited internet connectivity—with USAID/BHA support, and plans to distribute the items following mandatory COVID-19 quarantine. Meanwhile, despite continued connectivity challenges, local telecommunications and internet providers had restored some voice, SMS messaging, and limited internet services on Tongatapu by late January, with efforts underway to restore a data link between Tongatapu and Ha'apai, the ETC and the International Telecommunications Union report.

## **Food Security, Livelihood Conditions Likely to Worsen Following Shocks**

Relief actors are working to assess the full economic effects of eruptions and tsunami, including on household food and livelihood security, across affected areas of Tonga. The GoT, with assistance from the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and WFP, continues to assess the damage caused by the eruption and tsunami to Tonga's agricultural and fishing sectors, which comprise the nation's primary economic industries and support an estimated 80 to 90 percent of the population, according to the UN. In early February, the GoT released the Tongan Food Security and Livelihood Cluster Recovery Plan, which estimates that the eruptions and tsunami damaged or destroyed approximately \$17 million in productive assets—such as agricultural and fishing equipment, crops, and livestock—across affected areas of Tonga, particularly 'Eua, Ha'apai, and Tongatapu, disrupting income-generating opportunities for affected populations. Prior to the eruption and tsunami, approximately 20 percent of households in Tonga faced moderate or severe food insecurity, according to WFP. Recent shocks—including the eruptions and tsunami, as well as COVID-19-related lockdowns—will likely cause households to

<sup>3</sup> The ETC is the coordinating body for emergency telecommunications activities, comprising UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders. The ETC in the Pacific region is led by USAID/BHA partner the UN World Food Program (WFP).

experience greater food and livelihood insecurity, while the potential increase in prices of select products in Tonga due to the partial or complete damage of crops and fisheries, supply chains disruptions, and COVID-19-related restrictions on movement could further exacerbate food insecurity in the coming months.

## **USAID Provides More Than \$2.6 Million in Response to Eruption and Tsunami Needs, and to Address COVID-19**

USAID/BHA has allocated \$2.6 million in funding to support emergency response and recovery efforts in Tonga following the mid-January volcanic eruptions and tsunami, while previously-provided USAID/BHA and USAID Bureau for Global Health (USAID/GH) funding is supporting COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts in the country. USAID/BHA supports the Tonga Red Cross Society (TRCS) via the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC); the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) to provide critical health, coordination, protection, and WASH assistance across the most-affected areas of Tonga. Furthermore, with previous USAID/BHA support, WFP and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) are providing logistics, emergency telecommunications, health, and protection assistance in Tonga. USAID/GH also provides vaccine technical assistance through UNICEF for cold chain equipment and PPE to Tonga. In addition, Tonga has received 84,800 vaccines through the COVAX Facility, to which the U.S. Government (USG) is the largest financial contributor, as of January 28.

Additional USG assistance to facilitate GoT-led emergency response and recovery efforts is provided by the USAID–U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Volcano Disaster Assistance Program (VDAP) and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Additionally, a U.S. Department of Defense naval vessel—the United States Ship (USS) Sampson—and a U.S. Coast Guard vessel—the United States Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) Stratton—bolstered efforts to address urgent humanitarian needs in Tonga. While USS Sampson's support to Tonga recently concluded, USCGC Stratton will continue to operate in the area and is prepared to support additional requests from the GoT. Both the USS Sampson and USCGC Stratton coordinated with FRANZ partners and the Government of the United Kingdom to support the GoT following the volcanic eruptions.<sup>4</sup>

### **KEY FIGURES**



**7**

Chatty Beetles provided by NOAA with USAID/BHA support en route to Tonga

## **NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL, AND U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

### **EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

To facilitate GoT-led efforts to fully restore internet and telecommunications services, ETC and FRANZ partners are delivering emergency telecommunications supplies and providing support to telecommunications operators in Tonga. As ETC and Logistics Cluster lead, USAID/BHA partner WFP is coordinating the deployment of ETC commodities, including BGANs, satellite phones, and two-way satellite ground stations—also known as VSATs—to augment the availability of telecommunications services. Additionally, with USAID/BHA support, NOAA is deploying seven satellite terminals—known as Chatty Beetles—that enable text messaging in areas with

<sup>4</sup> The FRANZ Arrangement between France, Australia, and New Zealand was signed on 22 December 1992. Under the arrangement the three governments agree to coordinate disaster reconnaissance and relief assistance in the Pacific when requested by partner countries. FRANZ is a civilian-led arrangement that is supported by defense forces. FRANZ partners coordinate closely with the affected countries and with the Pacific Humanitarian Team, which also includes humanitarian and development partners from the UN, the Red Cross movement, NGOs and civil society organizations.

limited connectivity to disseminate hydrometeorological and other sudden-onset disaster information to remote locations, as well as related communications equipment, such as mobile and fixed antennas and batteries.

## HCIMA AND LOGISTICS



Clusters activated to respond to humanitarian needs from the volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga

USAID/BHA partners OCHA and WFP have provided critical humanitarian coordination, information management, and assessment (HCIMA) assistance and logistics support for humanitarian and early recovery operations in Tonga. With USAID/BHA funds, OCHA is strengthening strategic coordination through the GoT, the UN, the International NGO Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT), and cluster system. Ten clusters have been activated to respond to humanitarian needs related to the eruptions and tsunami in Tonga, and OCHA is helping ensure an evidence-based approach to meeting needs in the country. USAID/BHA funding has also enabled iMMAP to deploy staff to facilitate OCHA-led coordination, information management, and operations.

Meanwhile, WFP continues to provide warehouse management and supply chain coordination assistance for the delivery of mobile storage units and other relief commodities in Australia, Fiji, and Tonga, the first of which arrived on a Government of Australia vessel on January 26. As of February 10, Logistics Cluster and FRANZ partners had supported the transportation and supply of hundreds of metric tons (MT) of relief commodities, including telecommunications materials, food assistance, medical supplies, and safe drinking water to eruption- and tsunami-affected islands.

## FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS



Households dependent on agriculture and fisheries negatively affected by the eruption and tsunami

In coordination with NEMO, USAID/BHA partner WFP continues to lead regional food security coordination efforts—with additional support from FAO, the PHT, and local NGOs—ensuring that organizations providing food assistance are meeting the daily food needs of affected populations. As of February 10, the Pacific Community—an international development organization governed by 27 member states, including the USG and Tonga—had delivered more than 1.3 MT of maize and vegetable seeds across affected communities to bolster household food security, according to the UN.

## HEALTH AND PROTECTION

Nearly all of the 85,000 individuals directly affected by the eruption and tsunami, including more than 32,000 children, are in need of health or protection assistance, according to initial GoT assessments. NEMO, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), is conducting needs assessments among displaced populations to inform response planning. Meanwhile, relief actors continue to supplement GoT capacity to meet the health care and protection needs of affected populations. With USAID/BHA support, IFRC—through the TRCS—is distributing hundreds of dignity kits to women and girls to address hygiene



**85,000**

People in need  
of immediate  
health and protection  
assistance

and protection needs. Both UNICEF and TRCS are also conducting psychosocial support interventions to help affected populations cope with volcano- and tsunami-related trauma. USAID/BHA partner UNFPA has delivered more than 1,500 dignity kits and is providing integrated SRH and gender-based violence response services on Nomuka and Tongatapu islands, in coordination with the GoT Ministry of Health (MoH) and local NGOs.

USAID is also bolstering health system capacity to address COVID-19 across Tonga. With USAID/BHA funds, UNICEF is providing PPE to the MoH, enabling first responders to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and minimize the inhalation of volcanic ash—as well as COVID-19 testing supplies to support GoT-led COVID-19 mitigation efforts. Meanwhile, USAID/GH support for COVID-19 response efforts includes infection prevention and control; risk communication; oxygen concentrators; surveillance; and lab support provided through grants to UNICEF and WHO.

## **WASH**



**30,600**

People reached with  
WASH assistance as of  
February 10

Since mid-January, international relief actors—including FRANZ, NEMO, and PHT partners—have provided at least 243,000 gallons of safe drinking water to affected communities across Tonga, as well as other critical WASH commodities, including hygiene kits, pumps, water storage tanks, and water purification tablets, among other items. As of February 10, approximately 30,600 individuals had received WASH assistance across Tonga, according to the UN.

USAID/BHA partners UNICEF and TRCS are delivering WASH supplies to thousands of affected households across ‘Eua, Ha’apai, Tongatapu, and Vava’u island groups. As of February 4, the TRCS had distributed approximately 150 hygiene kits and nearly 1,800 gallons of water across Tonga, benefitting more than 10,000 individuals. The relief organization is also distributing fuel in coordination with NEMO to enable water pumping systems across the island. With USAID/BHA support, UNICEF will work to repair WASH facilities in communities, health care facilities, and schools negatively affected by the volcanic eruption and tsunami to ensure the restoration of access to safe drinking water.

## **EARLY RECOVERY, RISK REDUCTION, AND RESILIENCE**

Nearly one month after the volcanic eruption and tsunami, the GoT and humanitarian partners continue to address affected populations’ basic needs, particularly food security and WASH assistance, while also prioritizing strategies for economic and social recovery. Given Tonga’s extreme vulnerability to disasters, USAID/BHA supports preparedness and disaster risk reduction programming in Tonga and across the Pacific.

USAID/BHA is supporting NOAA to deploy tsunami data collection equipment, including laser rangefinders, to the GoT to bolster future tsunami warning forecast models worldwide. Additionally, the USAID–USGS

VDAP is preparing to ship volcano monitoring equipment to New Zealand for use should international experts be able to provide onsite technical assistance to the Tonga Geological Service in the coming weeks. This equipment includes a seismic station to detect volcano-related earthquakes, an infrasound array to detect explosions, and supporting equipment for installation and data transfer to monitor the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai Volcano.

Moreover, to support disaster risk reduction programming for vulnerable communities, USAID/BHA has supported Act for Peace to implement its Inclusive Disaster Resilience project in Tonga, which is working with the GoT and civil society organizations (CSOs) to strengthen the resilience of approximately 9,000 people across 27 vulnerable and remote communities through 2022. Through this program, the local organization Tongan National Council for Churches trains village emergency management committees on disability inclusion for village-level disaster response plans and provides technical support to NEMO. In addition, Act for Peace has conducted structural rehabilitation and upgrades to emergency evacuation centers across Tonga, ensuring these facilities are safe and accessible to all individuals.

In addition, USAID/BHA supports CARE and its local partner Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation Tonga Trust (MORDI TT) to promote increased community resilience to climate change and disasters through gender and disability inclusive approaches for emergency preparedness and emergency response planning. The program promotes increased knowledge and skills of communities, CSOs, and government agencies at local and national levels for planning and implementing disaster risk reduction programs, and to recognize and address the different needs and priorities of women and people with disabilities as equal contributors in those programs. To date, the program has reached 87 communities throughout Tonga.

#### USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TONGA VOLCANO AND TSUNAMI RESPONSE IN FY 2022<sup>1</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA			
IFRC	Health, WASH	Nationwide	\$200,000
OCHA	HCIMA	Nationwide	\$200,000
UNICEF	Health, Protection, WASH	Nationwide	\$425,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$825,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TONGA VOLCANO AND TSUNAMI RESPONSE IN FY 2022</b>			<b>\$825,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of February 11, 2022.

## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION



- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org/).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: <https://www.cidi.org/disaster-responses/tonga-volcano-and-tsunami/>
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)